OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00564/HHFUL Householder (Full)

Proposal: Two Storey Rear Extension

Location: 6B The Bank Somersham Huntingdon

Applicant: Ms Anna Chivers

Grid Ref: 536874 277920

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The site comprises of a two-storey detached dwellinghouse located in a well-established residential area in Somersham. There are no constraints relevant to the site.

The application seeks planning permission for a two-storey rear extension.
During the course of the application, amended plans were received to address amenity issues regarding the proposed obscure glazed window to serve a bedroom. Therefore, the agent has submitted amended plans to remove the access to this room from the hallway and it will now be used as an en-suite with access from the rear bedroom.

Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). .'

The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

* delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
* achieving well-designed places;
* conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
* conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2019 are also relevant and material considerations.

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

LP 11: Design Context
LP 12: Design Implementation
LP 14: Amenity

LP 31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017):
* Place Making Principles - Part 3.7 Building Form

Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

CONSULTATIONS

Somersham Parish Council support the application. The proposal is in keeping with the existing street scene.

REPRESENTATIONS

Two comments from neighbouring sites have been received, one in support and one objection:

- We have viewed the plans and elevations and can confirm that we have no objections to this application. The style of the proposed works are in keeping with the original building and the extension is unlikely to cause any inconvenience to neighbouring properties.

- I have no objection to an extension in principle, but do object to the addition of a window in the side elevation of the house at first floor level.
- Loss of privacy from the proposed first-floor window on the side of the house
- The proposed first floor window on the side elevation poses significant and direct threat to the privacy of my property. It will overlook my garden and patio area which is used as my main private outdoor amenity space and into my kitchen. It will also give a clear view of my balcony, which extends out of my en-suite bathroom and dressing area, which would be seen into from the proposed window. Given its elevated height, this window would allow clear views over the existing boundary fence, creating a sense of intrusion and surveillance that is unacceptable in a residential context.
- The proposal clearly breaches key planning principles, including Policy LP14 (Amenity) of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 which requires that developments safeguard the amenity of existing occupiers and avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking.
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) which sets out expectations for protecting the privacy of gardens and outdoor spaces, particularly from upper floor windows of extensions.
- I strongly oppose the inclusion of any traditional glazed or obscure glazed window at first floor level on the side wall. While obscure glazing may reduce visual intrusion to some extent, it does not eliminate it entirely or eliminate the perception of being overlooked. Nor does it prevent the loss of privacy that comes from simply having a window in that position.
- Concerned if the current owners decide to move, that any future owner would easily change the frosted glass for clear glass and then I would be fully on view with no recourse. What would stop them from changing the glass in the window to clear glass and making the window fully opening in the future?
- It is also my understanding that the window would also be an opening window, which again is unacceptable to me with regards to my right of privacy. Even if only open a small amount, a gap can be looked through.
- I would also be concerned that a window overlooking my garden, would bring down the value of my property and make it difficult to sell should I ever want to move.
- Obscure glazing and a window that opens is not an appropriate solution in this context, particularly when better alternatives exist.

- Should the applicant require natural light in the proposed first floor space, this can and should be achieved through less intrusive means such as rooflights, angled window, high level windows that don't open, with obscure glazing set at least 1.7 metres above internal floor level
- I would respectfully ask that the start of any building work is delayed until the summer is over
- Any noisy building work isn't started until after 8:30am and that I am to be informed well in advance of any particularly disruptive work
- Should any fencing be damaged during building works, I ask that these are immediately replaced at their expense
- Should any trees be damaged or die off in the 2 years following commencement of work, as a result of the building works, which will likely disturb the roots of 2 of my trees, I request that I receive adequate compensation to cover replacement.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- Design and Visual Amenity
- Residential amenity
- Trees
- Other matters

Design and Visual Amenity

Policy LP 11 of the adopted Local Plan to 2036 states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and has regard for the guidance contained within the Design SPD (2017).

The Bank hosts a number of detached and semi-detached dwellings that vary in scale and design. There is evidence of a number of materials in the vicinity, including brickwork and render. The application site is a two-storey detached dwellinghouse of brick and tile construction. The dwelling is set back from the road and has a gravelled driveway.

The application seeks permission for a two-storey rear extension. The extension would infill the gap between the existing two-storey rear projection to the north-east and would create an office/playroom to the ground floor and a bedroom at first floor.

As a result of the two-storey extension, a new room would be created within the original part of the dwellinghouse. This room was initially proposed to be used as a bedroom, however, the only source of natural light and outlook to this room would have been a single window fitted with obscure glazing, which raised concerns regarding the quality of amenity for the occupants and any future occupants due to insufficient outlook and daylight. To address the concerns, the agent has amended the plans to change the use of this room from a bedroom to an en-suite bathroom. This revised use is considered acceptable, as it does not require the same standard of outlook or natural light. The window will remain obscure glazed to protect the privacy of neighbouring occupiers, and a condition will be imposed to secure this in perpetuity.

The proposed extension would be modest in scale and the materials would match those of the existing dwellinghouse and stone cills would be added to all windows.

The proposed two storey extension by virtue of its siting, scale, size, design and materials would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

Overall, it is considered the proposed development is acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Residential Amenity

Policy LP14 states that a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings in terms of light, outlook, privacy and noise.

In terms of neighbouring amenity, the proposed two-storey rear extension would be set in approximately 1.2 metres from the shared boundary with 8 The Bank, which reflects the existing separation distance between the two properties. The extension is considered modest in both scale and design and would not introduce any new opportunities for overlooking beyond those already present from existing first-floor windows to the rear. The only new window proposed at first-floor level on the side elevation would serve an en-suite bathroom and would be obscure glazed, which is considered an appropriate and effective measure to address any perceived overlooking. A condition is recommended to ensure that this window is installed and retained as obscure glazed with restricted opening. The siting, and scale of the extension would no result in any unacceptable overshadowing or overbearing impacts on neighbouring sites. Overall, the proposal is not considered to result in an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers in planning terms.

Therefore, given the siting and scale of the proposed extension, the impact on amenity would be acceptable and would accord with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Trees

There are two trees located off site that could be affected by construction works and therefore HDC’s Arboricultural Officer has been consulted.

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement has been provided with the application which details how damage to these trees would be avoided during the construction process. The development would not involve the removal of any trees and excavations have proven that significant roots are not in the locations proposed for works. As such, no root protection measures would be required as the trees are far enough away and do not root in the affected locations. The report also shows the shading produced by the off-site trees, and although they do provide screening, no shading would impact the development. Light pruning would exercise the applicant’s legal rights to prune vegetation back to the boundary and should not impact the trees significantly.

Therefore, impacts to the trees near to the site should be very limited due to their small size and limited rooting/foliar spread and the proposal is considered acceptable and accords with Policy LP31 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

Other matters

The concerns raised by the neighbouring site to the east are noted and have been carefully considered. The objection primarily relates to perceived overlooking and loss of privacy from the proposed first floor window as well as additional concerns regarding construction timing and boundary treatment.

Amended plans were received on 4th July 2025 to show the proposed first-floor side window would now serve an en-suite bathroom with access from the rear bedroom. The window would be obscure glazed and restrictions on opening could be secured by condition. This treatment is considered sufficient to prevent harmful overlooking into neighbouring properties. It is also relevant to note that under permitted development rights, a similar window could be installed without

planning permission. This fallback position is a material consideration and supports the acceptability of the proposed window in planning terms.

A condition is recommended to ensure the obscuring glazing window is installed and retained together with restricted opening, thereby safeguarding residential amenity in accordance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017).

While comments have been made with regards to the timing of construction works, for a householder extension in a residential area it would not be reasonable to control the timing or scheduling of such building works. The building works are temporary in nature and should a statutory noise nuisance occur over and above normal and reasonable construction activities this could be raise with the Environmental Health team.

Concerns regarding potential damage to fencing or trees during construction are noted. However, such matters are considered civil issues and would fall under the scope of the Party Wall Act 1996 or other private legal arrangements. They are not material planning considerations that can be taken into consideration through the planning process.

Conclusion
The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it:
* Is of an appropriate scale and design
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Robyn Kerrigan**